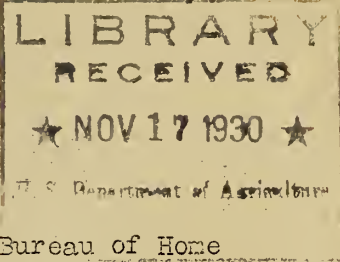


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CURTAINS FOR THE LIVING ROOM

A radio talk by Miss Bess M. Viemont, home economist, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through WRC and 38 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, October 23, 1930.

As I told you a few weeks ago, the choice of curtains for your living room depends so much upon other furnishings that it is impossible to consider them independently. If you happen to be one of the few homemakers who is buying all new furnishings, including curtains, your problem is easy. The window hangings can be made the center of your decorative plan.

But from time to time curtains must be replaced in rooms where other furnishings are still in good condition. It seems that the question of when to use plain materials and when to use figured ones is always perplexing. A general rule that is safe for you to follow is: With plain walls use figured draperies and with figured walls use plain draperies.

In a room with plain walls we depend upon the windows to add interest and variety. Their hangings should be colorful but since the living room is the meeting place of so many people -- the family, friends, and oftentimes strangers -- the curtains must be delightful and not so unusual as to be conspicuous. The colors chosen must be soft and rich rather than harsh and defiant and they must blend with those in the upholstery, rug, and pictures.

Figured side draperies require simple glass curtains such as filet net, marquissette, scrim or theatrical gauze. Sometimes small dots or crossbars can be used but dominant designs must be avoided.

Many windows in a room have a tendency to make it seem smaller than it really is. Draperies chosen for such a room should harmonize closely with the wall to counteract the chopped-up appearance of so many openings. Select a material with a background that matches the wall and that has a design of related colors. For example, with cream-colored walls, a material with a cream background, and a design in tones of brown and brick red, with perhaps a small amount of green for contrast, would be a good choice. On the other hand, if the room with many windows is extremely large, contrasting curtains will make it seem smaller.

Patterned walls need plain hangings to give the room a rest space. The draperies may repeat the dominant color of the wall decoration, but a more pleasing choice would be some other color in the wall covering. One of the less prominent colors might be chosen for the side draperies and the dominant one repeated for glass curtains. For example, suppose the wallpaper has a deep ivory background with green and rose-colored figures. Green side draperies with ecru glass curtains could be used. But remember that whether the draperies are figured or plain they must not be brighter than the most dominant colors in the room. If they are, the other furnishings will appear old and faded.

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The length to make side draperies and glass curtains is determined somewhat by personal likes and dislikes but more by the relation the size and shape of the window and the height and width of the wall in which it is located. Bungalows are apt to have short, wide windows and low ceilings while other houses frequently have high ceilings and tall narrow windows. Of course, the same treatments would not be suitable in these two houses. With low ceilings and short windows, draperies that extend to the lower edge of the apron or to the floor and hung so that they cover a part of the glass tend to make the ceiling higher and the windows taller. On the other hand, short draperies hung over the window frame, so that they cover little or none of the glass, make the window seem shorter and wider, and the ceiling lower. It is possible to use a valance on a window of this kind to give the impression of less height and greater width. And sometimes looping back the side draperies gives the desired effect. When planning new curtains it is always wise to make drawings to scale that show the window and its relation to the wall space. Then various length draperies and styles of valances and loopings can be sketched in. These will give an idea of how the finished treatment will look, and although it may take a little longer in the beginning, it may save much time and many disappointments in the end. Also these sketches can be used in estimating the amounts of materials needed and in calculating the cost for different kinds of hangings.

So if you are needing new living room curtains, decide first on whether you should have plain or figured material. Second, always remember that the curtains should blend with other furnishings and that their color must not be brighter than anything else in the room. Third, make several accurate drawings of the window. On these try different styles of curtains estimating the yardage and cost of the material for each.